

PROTECTING MEDICAL RECORDS AND HEALTH INFORMATION

Panel Chair

Joan D. Winston, Trusted Information Systems, Inc.

Panelists

Gail Belles, VA Medical Information Security Service

Bill Braithwaite, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Paula J. Bruening, Information Policy Consultant

Patricia Taylor, U.S. General Accounting Office

Patient care is becoming increasingly computer-intensive. Electronic records and transactions are central to health-care administration, payment, and cost containment. The prospect of lifelong electronic patient records -- whether stored centrally, in geographically distributed but logically linked databases, or in portable tokens -- is just below the horizon. As a result, public and government awareness and concerns regarding privacy protections for these records is also increasing. Congress is attempting to establish a new privacy framework for medical and other personal information in electronic, networked environments. At the same time, despite severe resource constraints, Federal agencies must meet the challenges of safeguarding health-related information for tens of millions of Americans.

This panel will examine the technical, policy, and legal issues involved in establishing and implementing appropriate protections for patient medical records and other types of health information.

Audience participation and discussion will be encouraged! Topics that we will explore include:

- Information security principles and practices in the patient-care environment;
- New medical-records issues presented by networking;
- Controversies over secondary and unanticipated uses of health information held by the public and private sectors;
- Impact of U.S. and OECD information privacy laws and policies, including new legislation;
- Federal agency approaches to medical record and health information protection;
- Evaluation of privacy and security implementations;
- Impact of cryptography policies on medical record and health information protection.

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Contact Information for Panelists

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Panelist Outline: Protecting Medical Records and Health Information

**Gail Belles, Acting Director
Medical Information Security Service
Veterans Health Administration**

- Brief background of VHA's health care system and automated hospital information systems
- Changing technologies—shift from mainframe to distributed computing environment
- Goals of information security—laws and standards that impact these goals
- Standard security controls in place
- Specific security controls in medical record applications
- Kernel System Management
- Network protection issues
- Current projects/information security issues